



African Air Chiefs Conference Keynote

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Introduction

General Woodward, thank you very much for that kind introduction, and more importantly, for hosting this very important conference. Fellow air chiefs, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen: I am extremely privileged to be able to speak before you this morning. As friends, we come together in the spirit of optimism in what we can achieve together. As airmen, we gather today to share our unique view of the inherent characteristics of airpower—its unparalleled speed, range, flexibility, and versatility—and to discuss how they can be leveraged toward our common advantage and the achievement of shared objectives.

Stability, Development, and Prosperity through Partnership and Cooperation

Among the most important of these objectives is creating conditions for stability and prosperity in Africa. General Carter Ham testified as much earlier this month, before the Armed Services Committee of the United States House of Representatives. Effectively reaffirming President Obama's declaration of Africa's strategic importance to the United States, General Ham stated: "An Africa that can generate and sustain broad-based economic development will contribute to global growth, which is a long-standing American interest." This statement informs our fundamental strategy to collaborate with our African friends and partners, on the basis of shared interests, mutual respect and trust, and commitment to learn from each other.

To emphasize, I echo the words of Vice Admiral Robert T. Moeller, known to most of us as one of the visionary founders of U.S. Africa Command, who led early planning efforts, and served first as the director of the AFRICOM Transition Team, and then as the first-ever deputy to the AFRICOM commander for military operations. We also knew him as our friend and mentor, and a wise and respected statesman. To our profound sadness last month, he lost a courageous, nearly two-year battle with Lou Gehrig's disease, but despite his untimely passing, we take solace in the fact that he imparted a very significant portion of his substantial wisdom. In July of 2010, he wrote in a published article: "U.S. security interests in



Africa are best served by building long-term partnerships with African nations, regional organizations, and the African Union.”¹

This guiding principle, in essence, is what the United States is pursuing with you, our friends in Africa: productive partnerships with common purpose. This conference brings together a community of airmen who are connected by an appreciation of what airpower can do to present additional strategic and operational options for our national and coalition leaders, and who are bound by a shared desire for stability, security, political viability, and opportunity for economic development in Africa. While I am encouraged by the progress that we have made together in the last several years—first under the ground-breaking leadership of General Kip Ward, and now under Carter Ham’s steady hand—I know that we still have a lot of hard work ahead of us, and I know that General Ham would agree. My hope is that we engage in candid discussions at this conference, and continue constructive discourse beyond today, so that we might present viable airpower options to our political leadership, and work toward a more promising future. To address our various shared challenges, we must maintain a longer view toward solutions that are strategically sustainable and effective, even while we identify opportunities for short-term progress on our most pressing, most urgent needs.

From a U.S. military perspective, the application of military power abroad, when our civilian leadership directs it, supports our civilian-led foreign policy and our most vital national interests. To that end, Joint military leadership is being recalibrated to be more effective, emphasizing three key areas:

- first, mutual responsibility, respect, and support with and to our U.S. Interagency and international partners;
- next, full-spectrum military capabilities to underpin U.S. foreign and defense policy; and
- finally, direct and indirect leadership approaches as facilitator, enabler, convener, and guarantor of support to broader U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives, and those of our friends and allies around the world.

These three focus areas will serve as my broad framework for discussion today.

¹ Robert T. Moeller, “The Truth about AFRICOM,” *Foreign Policy*, July 2010.



The Military Role in Foreign Policy—Mutual Responsibility, Respect, and Support

Part and parcel of mutual responsibility, respect, and support begins with a holistic view of African partner requirements and U.S. strategic objectives. We understand that myriad political, socio-economic, and security challenges will require, from a U.S. perspective, civilian-led foreign policy that will increasingly employ a whole-of-government approach. Because our approach comprises dimensions of diplomacy, development, and defense, it necessarily will involve many departments and agencies of the U.S. Government in an integrated and mutually-supporting fashion. Moreover, due to the tremendous importance of private entities, we would do well to expand the notion of coordinated effort to include non-governmental organizations, academia and think tanks, and private industry, toward a coherent whole-of-nation approach. This best positions us for success, with a more adaptive blend of national ways and means to address the challenges in a dynamic strategic environment, such as here in Africa.

Collectively, mutual responsibility, respect, and support certainly extend beyond our shores to include our global partners. One of General Ham's operating principles is to "listen and learn from our African partners." I am here to assure you that the U.S. Air Force, acting through Major General Maggie Woodward and the Seventeenth Air Force team, is also listening and learning—with a sense of purpose. We will remain in lockstep with General Ham's intent, and in compliance with our responsibility to provide full-spectrum air and space power to the AFRICOM commander. We understand that you are concerned with the ongoing dangerous cycle of poverty, instability, conflict, environmental degradation, disease, and other challenges that can serve to erode confidence in national institutions, governance, and socio-economic opportunity. We also appreciate that countering negative effects in this multi-faceted and dynamic environment requires regional cooperation, with cross-border efforts that are integrated to counter corrupting influences and transnational crime such as the trafficking of narcotics, people, and weapons. Regional cooperation also applies to humanitarian disasters—whether man-made or natural—that inflict suffering, loss of life, and population



displacement. Because all of these challenges threaten development in Africa, cause hardship to her peoples, and can in turn disrupt global stability and a range of U.S. interests, we share these concerns with you.

To accentuate this point, I again invoke Admiral Moeller's judgment: "As we conduct our...activities across Africa[,] we share a long-term vision with our African partners[.] Sustained security programs can, over time, help support the conditions for economic development, social development, and improvements in health[,] so that people will continue to see progress in their lives and growing prosperity in their communities."² Admiral Moeller's observations are both astute and instructive, establishing for us a vision for mutually-beneficial partnerships and long-term cooperation to stem the tide of violent extremism, destructive transnational crime, menacing off-shore piracy, and other threats.

Full-Spectrum Airpower Contributions to Stability and Security in Africa

Our commitment to full-spectrum airpower will help to realize Admiral Moeller's vision. As a community of airmen, we must work together to provide more strategic and operational options for development and diplomacy, and certainly to meet the four defense-oriented goals that you—our African partners—have expressed:

- to maintain capable and accountable military forces that perform professionally and with integrity;
- to support and sustain these forces with effective, legitimate, and professional security institutions;
- to exercise national and regional means to dissuade, deter, and defeat transnational threats; and
- to possess the capacity to increase your support to international peacekeeping efforts.

With its inherent advantages, airpower will continue to play a prominent role in shaping the geostrategic environment in which we live. Through its ability to traverse vast areas—such as the 11.7 million square miles that compose this magnificent continent—with unmatched speed and ability to create tailored, timely, and precise effects, airpower assures greater strategic and operational options for

² Robert T. Moeller, "The Truth about AFRICOM," *Foreign Policy*, July 2010.



our national leadership. U.S. Airmen are proud partners with their fellow African airmen in this endeavor. In around one hour, during General Woodward's much-anticipated presentation, you will hear more about how U.S. Airmen are striving to bring about and facilitate more of airpower's benefits toward our common objectives. I urge you to pay close attention to her perspectives, for she is a visionary Airman and credible leader who will work tirelessly with her AFRICOM and African teammates to bolster collective capabilities, and to further develop indigenous security capacity across Africa.

From my perspective, the unique ability of airpower to be focused globally, yet tailored regionally, in creating rapid and precise effects, helps us to develop and maintain strategic and operational advantages, momentum, and initiative. This, in turn, enables our overall ability to act proactively. When we seek to address root causes of problems, and not wait until they manifest themselves through violence, we help to prevent lower-intensity challenges from festering into larger-scale crises that we then must confront. By underwriting our international engagements—specifically, by assuring greater freedom of political and diplomatic maneuver—airpower can help achieve the outcomes that we all desire.

Military Leadership—Facilitator, Enabler, Convener, and Guarantor

There is no denying that the U.S. Air Force is prepared to employ airpower on a global scale, yet able to tailor air- and space-borne capabilities very carefully and precisely to achieve the desired effect. However, contributions by U.S. Airmen involve much more than aircraft, weapon systems, and high-tech effects alone. The non-kinetic, non-combat employment of military airpower—which, through activities such as security cooperation, building partnerships, and developing partner capacities—complements and follows the lead of traditional diplomacy that the U.S. Department of State conducts. Just as effectively in providing military applications, airpower can deliver elements of international, non-governmental support, such as life-sustaining supplies by the International Red Cross or life-saving medical treatment by Doctors without Borders, to distressed, often isolated areas. The U.S. Air Force also undertakes robust approaches to building partnerships and partner



capacities—a core Department of Defense mission area and therefore a core function of the U.S. Air Force. Many enduring, highly-valued military-to-military relationships evolve through training and exercise opportunities, such as for peacekeeping and counterterrorism undertaken through the Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance, or “ACOTA,” program. It is particularly fitting to mention ACOTA, for in addition to the effectiveness of its military-to-military element, it demonstrates the strength of whole-of-government integration, as a program under the auspices of the U.S. State Department’s Global Peace Operations Initiative.

Coalescing the roles of facilitator, enabler, convener, and guarantor that I mentioned earlier, building partnerships and capacities is very important and highly valued for its ability to bring nations and people together, to help deepen security ties between them, to build additional resident capabilities, and to focus future cooperative efforts that rally around these newfound capabilities. Moreover, in a time of continued fiscal distress, these efforts will be ever more critical, as they have the potential to improve efficiency, contain costs, and boost effectiveness. Therefore, our combined efforts—for example, to develop and promote programs for preventive aircraft maintenance, airfield management and security, and enhanced logistics—all help to increase your ability to maximize the utility of your precious assets, particularly as operations and maintenance costs continue to escalate.

A notable vehicle through which we promote these programs and partnerships is our National Guard State Partnership Program. In the United States, this program is an example of what we call “Total Force integration” of our active, guard, and reserve components of our Air Force, to help achieve broader foreign policy and national security objectives. To you, it is a promising way to unite with committed and capable U.S. partners across a wide range of activities that build and develop broad capabilities in Africa. Because our National Guard Airmen can remain in assignments for longer periods of time than their active duty counterparts, these relationships can become more lasting and permanent rather than episodic or *ad hoc*. As our eight African partner nations will attest, this arrangement maximizes our potential for newfound vital capabilities, and adds enormous value to our efforts



to build collective capacities. General Woodward will expand on this point also, as will Ms. Heidi Grant, the Air Force deputy undersecretary for international affairs, from whom many of you will hear tomorrow—and for good reason, as she is another member of our senior U.S. Air Force leadership team who is thoughtful, capable, and committed to our shared interests in Africa.

Conclusion

The future holds for us threats that have yet to be revealed, requirements and challenges that have yet to materialize, and capabilities that have yet to be developed. For those who embrace the spirit of cooperation and advancement, it also holds opportunities that are to be explored and shared.

As airmen, we share a storied heritage of innovation and boldness that resulted in humankind taking to the skies, and throwing the door wide open to possibilities, bounded only by the sky itself. Today, airpower can facilitate greater strategic and operational options. Because of airpower's benefits, stability and security on the one hand, and socio-economic development on the other, need not be mutually exclusive. As leaders of airmen, we must continue to unleash the creative geniuses of all of our professionals toward action in common cause. I am confident in the partnerships between the airmen of Africa and those whom I have the privilege of representing this morning—the men and women of the United States Air Force. Please accept my expression of their highest regards, and convey their greetings to your airmen.

I wish to thank our gracious hosts again, for the opportunity to share a few thoughts today, and more importantly, for the warm fellowship and hospitality. The majesty and splendor of the lands of Africa—her vast deserts, lush forests, and great wildernesses—are rivaled only by the richness of her cultures and the magnificence of her people. I am truly privileged to be here this morning, amongst distinguished friends and colleagues. I thank you all very sincerely on behalf of America's Airmen.